

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 AID-05 CEQ-01 CIAE-00 SOE-02
COME-00 DODE-00 EB-08 EPA-01 INR-10 L-03 NSF-01
NSC-05 NSAE-00 PM-05 ICA-11 OES-09 SS-15 SP-02
DOE-15 INT-05 /123 W
-----047455 161110Z /15

R 141946Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9830
INFO USUN MISSION NEW YORK 1711
AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ECLA, SENV, UN, OCON, CI
SUBJ: ECLA WATER CONFERENCE

REF: STATE 164818, SANTIAGO 4112

1. ECLA SECRETARIAT WILL SOON ANNOUNCE BY TELEGRAM TO
COMMISSION MEMBERS THAT WATER CONFERENCE IN SANTIAGO HAS BEEN
POSTPONED TO OCTOBER 9-13.

2. INVOLVED ECLA STAFFERS DESCRIBE THE CONFERENCE ITSELF
AS WELL AS THE COMMISSION'S APPROACH AS LOW KEY. THEY SAY
COMMISSION'S INTENTIONS FOR THIS CONFERENCE ARE TO CREATE
A FORUM FOR DISCUSSION RESULTING IN SOME CONCRETE PROPOSALS FOR
TECHNICAL COOPERATION AS WELL AS A STRUCTURE MODELED AFTER THE
WATER RESOURCES EFFORTS OF THE EUROPEAN AND ASIAN COMMISSIONS.

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3. THE SEVEN DISCUSSION SUBJECTS OUTLINED IN ST/CEPAL/CONF
.63/L.3 ARE DECEPTIVE, IMPLYING, ACCORDING TO ECLA OFFICER,
A MUCH BROADER SCOPE THAN WILL ACTUALLY BE THE CASE. TOPICS
ONE AND TWO-- WATER FOR IRRIGATION AND POTABLE WATER -- ARE
ESSENTIALLY SUBJECTS FOR FAO AND WHO. LITTLE DISCUSSION
OF THESE IS EXPECTED. MOST DISCUSSION WILL CENTER
ON THE CAPABILITY OF REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS TO PROMOTE COOPERATIVE

EFFORTS (TOPIC THREE); SPECIAL RECOMMENDATIONS (TOPIC FOUR); STRENGTHENING ROLE OF ECLA (TOPIC FIVE) AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION (TOPIC SIX). AN ISSUE NOT SPECIFICALLY ON THE AGENDA, BUT ONE ECLA EXPECTS WILL BE HOTLY DEBATED, IS AN ANTICIPATED ATTEMPT BY THE ARGENTINES TO SECURE A RESOLUTION CALLING FOR A PERMANENT INTER-GOVERNMENTAL COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCES. SUCH A BODY WOULD BE SUPERIOR TO ECLA (AS A SECRETARIAT TO A WATER COMMISSION) AND MIGHT BE CONVOKED AT ANY TIME TO DEAL WITH A NATIONAL INTEREST ISSUE -- E.G. ARGENTINE INTEREST IN THE PARANA RIVER BASIN -- WITHOUT REFERENCE TO THE UNITED NATIONS OR ITS AGENCIES.

4. DEPARTMENT ALREADY HAS ALL NECESSARY DOCUMENTATION; NOTHING FURTHER WILL BE ISSUED BY ECLA. AS TO MEETING STRUCTURE THE NUMBER, COMPOSITION AND SUBJECTS FOR WORKING GROUPS TO BE HELD BETWEEN PLENARY SESSIONS WILL BE DECIDED BY THE DELEGATES AT THE FIRST MEETING OF THE WHOLE. IN FACT, SECRETARIAT ANTICIPATES THE MOST DISCUSSION WILL PROBABLY TAKE PLACE IN THE PLENARY SESSIONS. ONLY TWO POSSIBLE WORKING GROUPS ARE FORESEEN AT THE MOMENT: A TECHNICAL COOPERATION GROUP TO DISCUSS POTENTIAL RESEARCH AND PLANNING PROJECTS AND ANOTHER GROUP TO DISCUSS THE MECHANISTIC AND PLANNING PROCEDURES TO FACILITATE SUBSEQUENT PROGRAMS.

5. WHILE NOT PURPOSEFULLY DOWNPLAYING THE POTENTIAL IMPORTANCE OF CONFERENCE, ECLA DOES REPORT A DISAPPOINTING LEVEL OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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INTEREST ON THE PART OF COMMISSION MEMBERS. SO FAR, ONLY SIX LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES ARE EXPECTED TO SEND DELEGATIONS: MEXICO, COLOMBIA, VENEZUELA, ARGENTINA, CHILE AND BRAZIL. DELEGATIONS WILL PROBABLY BE COMPOSED OF NO MORE THAN TWO MEMBERS. OTHER COUNTRIES ARE EXPECTED TO PROVIDE REPRESENTATION FROM THEIR SANTIAGO EMBASSIES AS DELEGATES, WITH OR WITHOUT BRIEFS, OR AS OBSERVERS.

6. A PRELIMINARY PRESENTATION ON THE FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION PLAN WILL NOT REPEAT NOT BE MADE AT THE CONFERENCE. IDB WILL, HOWEVER, OFFER AN INFORMATION MEMORANDUM ON POSSIBLE FINANCING, BUT THIS DOCUMENT WILL NOT BE FORMALLY CONSIDERED. REPORTEDLY NOT WANTING TO FACE FINANCIAL QUESTIONS AT THIS EARLY STAGE, WORLD BANK HAS DECLINED TO ATTEND CONFERENCE. ECLA SHARES DEPARTMENT VIEW THAT NEW YORK PAPER FOR THIRD SPECIAL SESSION WILL NOT BE READY IN TIME FOR SANTIAGO CONFERENCE. ECLA OFFICER PRINCIPALLY INVOLVED WITH THIS SUBJECT FURTHER VOLUNTEERED THAT NEW YORK PAPER WHEN FINALLY PRODUCED WILL LIKELY BE A BLAND, NON-COMMITTAL WORK OF LITTLE SUBSTANTIVE VALUE, GIVEN THE CURRENT RELUCTANCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS TO PREMATURELY SHOW THEIR HANDS IN A REGIONAL AND SECTORAL MATTER.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: WATER, MEETINGS, COMMISSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978SANTIA05266
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780292-0100
Format: TEL
From: SANTIAGO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780759/aaaabxgl.tel
Line Count: 117
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: cae70773-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION IO
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 STATE 164818, 78 SANTIAGO 4112
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2002652
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ECLA WATER CONFERENCE
TAGS: SENV, OCON, CI, UN, ECLA
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/cae70773-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014